
Dozens of people, including women and children, have been killed in airstrikes in Western Afghanistan, according to the Red Cross. There has been heavy fighting in the Farah province with reports of more than 25 Taliban fighters also killed. Martin Patience reports:

A team sent by the Red Cross to the area where the **airstrikes** occurred saw **dozens** of bodies at each location they visited. According to a spokeswoman for the organisation, they saw locals burying many of the dead.

The organisation also said that one of its **volunteers** had been killed along with 13 members of his family. Both the Afghan government and the American military say they are **investigating the incident**. According to Afghan officials, the violence **broke out** after more than a hundred Taliban **militants** attacked a **police checkpoint** killing three police.

The fighting then moved to a nearby village where American airstrikes were carried out against **militants** believed to be **sheltering** in houses. The Afghan president, Hamid Karzai, is currently in Washington to **hold talks** with Barack Obama. But in the past, the Afghan leader has **urged** international forces to do more to **minimise civilian casualties**.

Martin Patience, BBC News, Kabul

Vocabulary and definitions

airstrikes	attacks by military aircraft on a city, enemy soldiers, or their supplies, either by bombing or by firing
dozens	a large number (one dozen is 12)
volunteers	people who do something, especially helping other people, willingly and without being forced or paid to do it
investigating the incident	carefully examining the event to discover the truth behind it
broke out	began or started suddenly
militants	people who use force to make their views known
police checkpoint	a place where people are stopped and questioned and vehicles are examined
sheltering	hiding from danger or an attack
hold talks	have formal talks or discussions
urged	encouraged to do something
minimise civilian casualties	to keep injuries or death for people who are not members of the police or armed forces to a minimum

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http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/language/wordsinthenews/2009/05/090506_witn_afghanistan_page.shtml